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I can't believe that Stommel is opposed to large-scale and long-term planning. If such planning is done poorly, it is necessary both to protest and to help in doing it better. Stommel has protested and, along with many other scientists, is actively contributing to better planning. I hope that his article will not persuade these scientists that national and international efforts to enhance support for oceanography are both misguided and futile and thus cause them to withdraw their essential contribution. There is also a danger that Stommel's views will be used as a weapon against these planning efforts and the organizations engaged in them. At least internationally, these organizations are fragile, and it would be a tragedy if they were further weakened by this well-intentioned but often misleading attack.

WARREN S. WOOSTER

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**Medical Editors' Dilemma**

The editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, writing in *Science* ("Medical literature: The campus without tumult," 28 Aug., p. 831), raises anew, and in the same disturbing fashion, an issue he examined in an editorial in his own journal in September 1969: a presumed "conflict" between the priorities of publishing scientific papers in full in scientific journals and the increasingly effective and rapid reporting of scientific news to scientists by professional journalistic methods.

The nub of Ingelfinger's complaint is that full journalistic reporting of medical news in the medical press may produce a situation in which later publication of some of this material in medical journals "merely serves archival, bibliographic, and narrow technical purposes." To avert this threat, he proposes measures which boil down to plain censorship or, on the most tolerant interpretation, a self-sacrificial restriction of news coverage by the medical press.

*Medical Tribune*, in an editorial commenting upon Ingelfinger's published proposals a year ago, said: "The [*New England*] *Journal's* proposed policy seems to have been conceived in a moment of irritation. Already, according to *Medical Tribune* staff members, it is resulting in some restriction of legiti-

mate news at medical meetings by creating a feeling of fear among some investigators that their full papers may not receive formal publication if they cooperate with medical news reporters. The *Journal's* proposals are unworthy of the principles of medical communication that the *Journal* itself, we are sure, espouses with us."

It seems odd—nay, anachronistic—in a time when professional and public support is desperately sought for science by investigators, teachers, editors, and students to avert budgetary disaster—to find restriction of news being advocated in the ranks of the defenders. Since Ingelfinger concedes in his *Science* article that his own journal must wait 2 to 6 months to publish what papers it does select, it should be emphasized that medical journalism has done yeoman service in shortening the time it takes to convey news highlights (virtually never the "complete conceptual and documental form" feared by Ingelfinger) from a scientific meeting, laboratory, or school to the practitioner in the field.

I am sure there will be others—professional science writers and editors in particular—who wish to examine Ingelfinger's premises and conclusions with great care. If there is a problem, it does not lie in his imagined competition but rather in the need for regular and comprehensive study of the critical requirements of communicating scientific information to the professions and the public.

FREDERICK SILBER

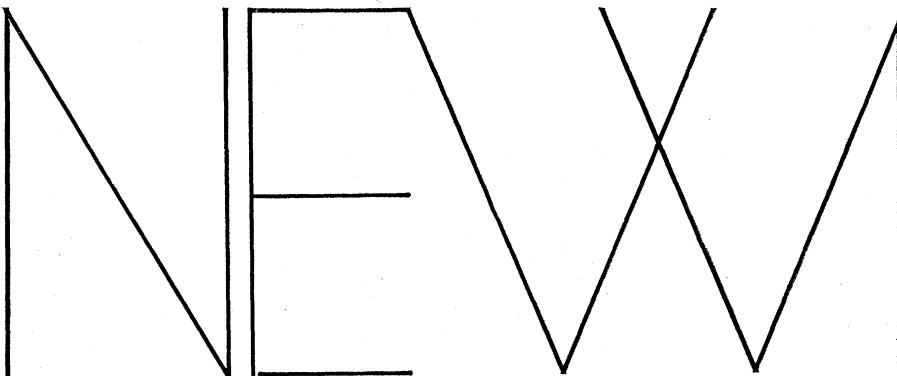
Medical Tribune,  
110 East 59 Street, New York 10022

### No Wrangle

May I set the record straight with reference to an allegation [attributed to E. G. Sherburne, Jr., director of Science Service] in Boffey's article (18 Sept., p. 1182)? Marcia Nelson was not "fired . . . at least partly because her job had largely been taken over by a computerized subscription service." I was, in fact, not fired at all, but resigned, partly for the reason stated, and partly because of a completely amicable agreement between Sherburne and me to disagree about some aspects of my job. No wrangle was involved in this action.

MARCIA NELSON

1305 Providence Terrace,  
McLean, Virginia



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